

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please CANCEL claims 3 and 5 without prejudice or disclaimer, ADD new claims 8 and 9 and AMEND the claims in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A communication setting management system for distributing communication characteristics settings to a plurality of communication entities connected to a network, the communication setting management system comprising a plurality of communication management setting apparatuses for managing a plurality of respective management domains, the system comprising:

a setting template entry/edit unit operated by a first administrator to enter or edit a setting template that collects contents to be set for the plurality of communication entities connected to the network, with reference to information on a concrete method of setting the communication entities;

a setting template storing unit storing each setting template entered or edited by the setting template entry/edit unit as operated by the first administrator;

an application rule entry/edit unit operated by a second administrator to enter or edit application rules prescribing rules corresponding to the setting template, entered or edited in the setting template entry/edit unit operated by the first administrator, which is to be applied to a communication having a specific attribute;

an application rule storing unit storing each application rule entered or edited by the application rule entry/edit unit; ~~and~~

retrieval and response function unit selecting, after the entering or editing the application rules by the second administrator, an application rule from the application rule storing unit in accordance with an attribute of a corresponding destination communication entity, reading from the setting template storing unit a setting template having a setting template name specified by the selected application rule, and distributing the read setting template to the corresponding destination communication entity; and

a contradiction detection function unit belonging to one of the management domains that mutually interchanges information between communication setting management apparatuses disposed in different management domains and detects a contradiction between the mutually interchanged information and the setting template and the application rule of the domain of the contradiction detection unit, wherein

the management domains communicate via a network, each management domain

having at least one communication entity and a communication setting management apparatus that imparts, on a management domain basis, different communication characteristics settings to respective communications between communication entities belonging to different management domains, each communication characteristics setting being managed on a corresponding management domain basis.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The communication setting management system according to claim 1, further comprising:

setting template collective entering unit collectively entering a group of previously defined setting templates into the setting template storing unit.

3. (CANCELLED)

4. (CANCELLED)

5. (CANCELLED)

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The communication setting management system according to claim [[5]]1, further comprising:

a contradiction modification function unit modifying a contradiction, at the time when the contradiction is detected, that a setting template or setting templates specified by the contradiction detection function unit according to the application rule to be the same, instead, are not.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A communication setting management method for distributing communication characteristics settings to a plurality of communication entities connected to a network, the communication entities each belonging to one of a plurality of management domains, each management domain being managed by a communication management setting apparatus, the method comprising:

entering or editing, by a first administrator, a setting template that collects contents to be set for the plurality of communication entities connected to the network, with reference to information on a concrete method of setting the communication entities;

storing each setting template entered or edited by the entering or editing as operated by the first administrator;

entering or editing, by a second administrator, application rules prescribing rules corresponding to the setting template, which is to be applied to a communication having a specific attribute;

storing each application rule entered or edited by the entering or editing; ~~and~~

selecting, after the entering or editing the application rules by the second administrator, an application rule from the storing each application rule in accordance with an attribute of a corresponding destination communication entity, reading from the storing each setting template a setting template having a setting template name specified by the selected application rule, and distributing the read setting template to the corresponding destination communication entity;

mutually interchanging information between communication setting management apparatuses disposed in different management domains; and

detecting a contradiction, via a contradiction detection unit belonging to one of the management domains, between the mutually interchanged information and the setting template and the application rule of the management domain of the contradiction detection unit, wherein

the management domains communicate via a network, each management domain having at least one communication entity and a communication setting management apparatus that imparts, on a management domain basis, different communication characteristics settings to respective communications between communication entities belonging to different management domains, each communication characteristics setting being managed on a corresponding management domain basis.

8. (NEW) The communication management setting method of claim 7, further comprising:

imparting contradicted setting templates to the communication entities, thereby avoiding problems where communication between the entities fails.

9. (NEW) A method, comprising:

mutually interchanging information between communication setting management apparatuses disposed in different management domains via a network, each management domain having at least one communication entity and a communication setting management apparatus that imparts, on a management domain basis, different communication characteristics settings to respective communications between communication entities belonging to different management domains, each communication characteristics setting being managed on a corresponding management domain basis; and

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detecting a contradiction, via a contradiction detection unit belonging to one of the management domains, between the mutually interchanged information and a setting template and an application rule of the management domain of the contradiction detection unit.